

## Message Text

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17

ACTION ITF-05

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 SS-15 SR-02 ORM-01 SCA-01 VO-03

INSE-00 H-02 NSC-05 IO-10 AID-05 PRS-01 OPR-02 A-01

SSO-00 NSCE-00 PM-03 DODE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

INRE-00 /070 W

----- 023182

O R 051003Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2476

INFO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

CINCPAC REP GUAM

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 1846

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREP, VS, SN

SUBJ: VIETNAMESE REFUGEES IN SINGAPORE

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

REFS: A. SINGAPORE 1827; B. STATE 104063

SUMMARY: I SAW ACTING PRIME MINISTER GOH AT 1430 MAY 5 TO REVIEW REFUGEE SITUATION AND REQUESTED GOS DELAY IN REQUIRING DEPARTURE OF VIETNAMESE VESSELS CARRYING REFUGEES (PER REF B). DR. GOH SAID THERE WERE NOW OVER 6,000 REFUGEES, BUT AGREED TO AN EXTENSION OF 5 DAYS. IN THE MEANTIME, GOS IS ENDEAVORING TO PROVIDE MINIMUM MEDICAL CARE AND REQUISITE PROVISIONS, AND WILL ALLOW PARTIES IN ROTATION TO GO ASHORE AT BEDOK FOR SEVERAL HOURS. END SUMMARY.

1. I CALLED ON ACTING PRIME MINISTER GOH THIS AFTERNOON TO DIS-  
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CUSS REFUGEE PROBLEM AND FOUND HIM PREOCCUPIED WITH DIFFICULTY OF

COPING WITH MOUNTING NUMBERS OF VESSELS AND REFUGEES. I POINTED OUT USG CONFRONTED WITH PROBLEM OF HANDLING 70,000 - 80,000 REFUGEES IN PHILIPPINES, AND THAT IT SEEMED UNWISE TO AT THIS TIME TO ENCOURAGE REFUGEES IN SINGAPORE TO GO TO SUBIC. I URGED DR. GOH TO DELAY FOR A PERIOD OF FIVE DAYS WHILE GOS, USG AND OTHER GOVERNMENTS HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO SORT OUT THE PROBLEM AND DETERMINE THE MOST SENSIBLE COURSE TO FOLLOW.

2. DR. GOH AGREED TO FIVE DAY DELAY, BUT SAID PROBLEM HAD ALMOST DOUBLED SINCE GOS PRESS CONFERENCE OF MAY 4. HE SAID THERE WERE NOW A TOTAL OF 33 VESSELS IN SINGAPORE WATERS OR FURTHER OFF SHORE WITH TOTAL 6,250 REFUGEES. THESE INCLUDED FOUR VIETNAMESE NAVAL VESSELS WITH TOTAL OF 600 ABOARD. HE ASKED THAT WE NOT REVEAL THIS FACT (HE INDICATED VIETNAMESE IN CHARGE OF THESE NAVAL VESSELS WISHED TO GO TO AUSTRALIA). GOH SAID GOS WAS PROVIDING SOME MEDICAL CARE, AND THAT THREE EX-VIETNAMESE SOLDIERS WITH SHRAPNEL WOUNDS WERE NOW IN LOCAL MILITARY HOSPITAL AND ONE PREGNANT LADY WAS RECEIVING HOSPITAL CARE. PROVISIONS WERE BEING SENT TO SHIPS, ALTHOUGH THERE WERE APPARENTLY DIFFICULTIES IN PROVIDING FUEL AND WATER. IN VIEW OF FIVE DAY DELAY, GOH SAID HE WOULD AUTHORIZE GROUPS OF REFUGEES TO COME ASHORE FOR SEVERAL HOURS TO STRETCH LEGS AND TEND TO OTHER IMMEDIATE NEEDS AND TO PERMIT CLEANING OF SHIPS.

3. GOH SAID ARRIVING SHIPS WERE FIRST BEING SCREENED IN RHIO STRAITS BY SINGAPORE NAVY CRAFT BEFORE BEING ALLOWED TO PROCEED TO ANCHORAGES OFF BEDOK AND JURONG (NAVATT QUESTIONS REFERENCE TO RHIO STRAITS, AND INDICATES GOS REFERRING TO AREA FURTHER EAST OF BEDOK OFF TANJAN STOPA). GOH SAID SOME OF THE LARGER SHIPS COULD CARRY MORE PEOPLE AND THAT GOS PLANNED TO TRANSFER PEOPLE FROM SMALLER VESSELS TO LARGER ONES BEFORE LETTING THEM LEAVE SINGAPORE. GOH SAID CATHOLIC CHURCH IN SINGAPORE HAD COLLECTED S\$30,000 FOR RELIEF OF THESE REFUGEES AND THAT COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICES WAS BEING ASKED TO MAKE NATIONAL APPEAL FOR FUNDS.

4. IN CONCLUSION, I THANKED DR. GOH FOR AGREEING TO DELAY, NOTED THAT USG WAS NOT IN A POSITION TO MAKE ANY COMMITMENTS BUT WOULD REVIEW PROBLEM ASAP WITH VIEW TO DETERMINING APPROPRIATE POLICY.

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5. MEANWHILE, NAVATT HAS TOURED AREA IN HELICOPTER MADE AVAILABLE BY BRITISH MILITARY AND REPORTS TOTAL OF 23 VESSELS AT BEDOK -- THREE VERY SMALL (LESS THAN 100 TONS), TEN SMALL (LESS THAN 200 TONS), THREE MEDIUM (200-500 TONS) AND SEVEN LARGE (OVER 500 TONS). AT TANJAN STOPA, HE SAW ONE SMALL FISHING VESSEL AND THREE VIETNAMESE NAVY LANDING CRAFT AND ONE PATROL GUNBOAT (NAVATT WILL REPORT DETAILS OF THESE CRAFT SEPARATELY). ALL SHIPS AP-

PEARED BASICALLY SEAWORTHY, BUT ABOUT FIVE ARE ONLY MARGINAL FOR  
DEEP SEA CROSSING. HALF THE SHIPS APPEARED OVERCROWDED WITH  
UNSATISFACTORY TO MARGINAL CONDITIONS. CRONK

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT, REFUGEE RELIEF  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 05 MAY 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** GolinoFR  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
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**Enclosure:** n/a  
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**Errors:** N/A  
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**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
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**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 75 SINGAPORE 1827, 75 STATE 104063  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** GolinoFR  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 08 JUL 2003  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <08 JUL 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <09 JUL 2003 by GolinoFR>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
05 JUL 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** VIETNAMESE REFUGEES IN SINGAPORE CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD  
**TAGS:** SREF, VS, SN, US  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006